

authorize loans for medical students by increasing the amount from 7,000 to 12,000 per year and a maximum of 48,000. Also, under that statute that currently exists, the state is authorized to provide a maximum of 40 of these loans per year. I see from the fiscal note, Senator Schellpeper, that the department is indicating no increase in funding for that program and inasmuch that with the budget reductions, budget cuts that occurred in the special session where the annualization of the reduction was taken out of this particular program, as I understand, increasing the maximum loan to 12,000 with a current distribution of 133,000, it means the state will only provide...can only provide 19 loans as opposed to 28 that we are doing this year. And I wanted to get clarified on the legislative intent and the intent of the bill that it is...would not be for the purpose of expanding, or would not result in expanding the cost of the program in order to fund more than 19 students, and my question is, is that the understanding that you have and those who proposed the bill that no more than 19 students would be funded because of the increased loan limit to 12,000?

PRESIDENT: Would you respond to that, Senator Schellpeper, please?

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Yes, that's right, Senator Warner. At the present time, we would like to have a lot more, but we will be satisfied with just the present amount that it will fund, which would be probably at the 19.

PRESIDENT: Senator Warner, had you finished?

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, I just wanted to indicate...the reason I asked the question, as most of you know, these kinds of things have a way of coming back in two or three years with an increase for additional funding. I have no quarrel with the program or with the benefit. Obviously, it's a good program and has resulted in providing some graduates of the medical schools back in rural areas. But it still seems to me to be important that we understand or those who are supporting the bill outside of this body understand that by doing this that, in fact, we will be reducing the number of individuals who qualify. Unless there is an increase in appropriation, it may well be that it would be desirable to reduce that maximum of 40 down to 20, which would reflect the level of funding that is anticipated so that there isn't any question but what that is all of the number of students it was intended to be provided. So it's somewhat